

Editors' Introduction

by Robert F. Carley, *andré m. carrington*, SAJ, Eero Laine, Alyson K. Spurgas and Chris Alen Sula | Issue 11.2 (Fall 2022)

ABSTRACT In this introduction, the editors continue their reflections on scholarly editing in the pandemic, welcome two new co-editors, and announce a grant-funded initiative that builds on *Lateral* Forums. This issue features three regular articles, book reviews, and the first installment of a special section, "Crip Pandemic Life: A Tapestry," which builds on the "Cripistemologies of Crisis" special section, edited by Theodora Danylevich and Aly Patsavas, last year.

KEYWORDS anti-Blackness, cultural studies, publishing, scholarly communication, pandemic

As 2022 draws to a close, this issue of *Lateral* comes into being with three articles, book reviews, and the first part of an extensive special section. Scholarly publishing in the pandemic era continues to present challenges and opportunities. Academic approaches to the pandemic have drawn attention to existing hierarchies and how they—and resistance to them—have been amplified in this period. Other approaches have ranged from thinking “fun” and “precarity” to considering how to continue our profession-as-usual with an “ethics of care.” Both in process and in content, *Lateral's* contributions emphasize pleasures and practices that exceed and supplement these approaches: solidarity, shared labor, and community. Our work has been trying to live, think, and create in the now without the backward-looking accelerationism of trying to rebuild what was or solve what might be.

There are a number of initiatives at the journal that extend our collective work and impact in new ways. We are very pleased to welcome as *Lateral* co-editors *andré m. carrington*, Associate Professor of English at the University of California, Riverside, and Alyson K. Spurgas, Associate Professor of Sociology and affiliated faculty in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Trinity College. Their disciplinary backgrounds and research areas complement our existing editorial team, and we look forward to the new directions they will bring to the journal.

We are also excited to announce a grant award from the [Social Science Research Council](https://ramp.ssrc.org/the-social-science-research-councils-media-and-democracy-) <
<https://ramp.ssrc.org/the-social-science-research-councils-media-and-democracy->

[program-announces-four-grantees-for-the-research-amp-partner-sites-program/](#) to develop a new initiative of the journal. Led by Rayya El Zein and building on her work as editor of *Lateral Forums* < <https://csalateral.org/archive/forum/cultural-constructions-race-racism-middle-east-north-africa-southwest-asia-mena-swana/> >, The Cultural Constructions of Race and Racism Research Collective (CcRrrC) will host a trans-regional network of media makers, scholars, and activists working to help their communities identify and dismantle colorism and anti-Black racism. The project turns to local and regional media and popular culture as both archive and tool—an archive in which to trace culturally specific histories of representation; and a tool with which to raise awareness, mobilize, and inform. CcRrrC will prioritize perspectives grounded in local languages that are familiar with regional understandings of ethnicity, sect, religion, gender, and class—as well as race. The platform will host these perspectives in a transnational, comparative frame. CcRrrC builds from the understanding that white supremacy is a global phenomenon manifest in specific vernaculars. This work looks to support and sharpen tools available to communities as they combat colorism and anti-Black racism. The first instances of CcRrrC will unfold over the course of the coming year; [subscribe](https://csalateral.org/subscribe) < <https://csalateral.org/subscribe> > or [follow](https://twitter.com/lateraljournal) < <https://twitter.com/lateraljournal> > us < <https://instagram.com/lateraljournal> > for more updates.

In our lead article this issue, "[Watchmen, Copaganda, and Abolition Futurities in US Television,](https://csalateral.org/issue/11-2/watchmen-copaganda-abolition-futurities-us-television-hatrick-gonzalez/)" < <https://csalateral.org/issue/11-2/watchmen-copaganda-abolition-futurities-us-television-hatrick-gonzalez/> > Jessica Hatrick and Olivia González argue that the 2020 HBO series *Watchmen*, while exploring the historical relationship between policing and white supremacy, ultimately reproduces copaganda conventions by glorifying police brutality and portraying white supremacist law enforcement characters as anomalous exceptions to an otherwise just police force. Through a close and critical reading of the series against the backdrop of the 2020 US protests for racial justice, the authors examine the carceral web in which Hollywood is caught and consider what abolitionist endings might look like on the screen. In the end, they argue, *Watchmen* fails to dismantle the need for police and refuses to acknowledge the anti-Blackness at the center of the police and prison complex.

Anthony Obst investigates W. E. B. DuBois's unpublished work, *A World Search for Democracy*, conceived of and begun (but not completed) in 1936 in the shadow of *Black Reconstruction*. In a correspondence with his publisher, DuBois writes, of *World Search*, that "I want to see how far I can induce Democracy, Fascism, and Communism to speak the same language and to draw into the picture the colored peoples of the world." *World Search* takes the form of a correspondence between two characters as they travel, assessing the state of democracy in different countries. Obst notes that DuBois's work provides a global frame for an enduring societal and political question placing formerly

enslaved and colonized people in that frame. In "Revolution of Thought and Action": W. E. B. Du Bois's World Search for Abolition Democracy," < <https://csalateral.org/issue/11-2/revolution-thought-action-du-bois-world-search-abolition-democracy-obst/>> Obst investigates *precisely how* DuBois frames the question of democracy. Drawing on the work of contemporary theorists, including Nancy Fraser, Sylvia Wynter, Sara Ahmed, Dylan Rodríguez, and others, Obst's original argument is that *World Search* can be read as offering outlines of abolition democracy as a three-fold project: political-economic, epistemic, and affective.

In "'Companionship and a Little Fun': Investigating Working Women's Leisure Aboard a Hudson River Steamboat, July 1919," < <https://csalateral.org/issue/11-2/companionship-and-a-little-fun-investigating-working-women-leisure-hudson-river-steamboat-1919-gallas/>> Austin Gallas provides an extensive cultural history of the policing of working class women's sexuality in the early twentieth century. As "progressive" reformers imposed a grid of sexual morality over urban space, especially Manhattan, through restrictions on social space, and using policing and surveillance techniques, steamboat excursions became an affordable means to escape moral regulation. Gallas investigates how these short and affordable trips, designed as attainable forms of leisure for working people—especially women—coincide with extraordinary efforts, both public and private, to observe, record, and police activities on these brief trips around the Hudson River. His exploration reveals an enormous fear and, at the same time, infantilization of working class people by people of status and means. Gallas's work captures the sexual and gender politics around the American working class in the early part of the twentieth century; it explores the fear around working class pleasures and the risks, associated with working class women in particular, involved in finding some small but very significant measure of autonomy.

In an installment growing from their special section, "Cripistemologies of Crisis," < <https://csalateral.org/archive/section/cripistemologies-of-crisis/>> published in issue 10.2 (Fall 2021), Theodora Danylevich and Aly Patsavas's co-edited "Crip Pandemic Life: A Tapestry" < <https://csalateral.org/archive/section/crip-pandemic-life/>> appears in this issue. Through fifteen contributions collected under the umbrellas of "praxis projects," "essays," and "creative works" and through the framing and analytical work in their introduction and roundtable conversation, Danylevich and Patsavas offer an essential and rich documentation of and reflection on disabled life and culture during the pandemic era. "Crip Pandemic Life: A Tapestry" provides novel insights into crip spacetime, care work, the ableist failures of institutions, and the multifacetedness of disability experience and wisdom. By drawing on contributions from a variety of sources and in a variety of forms, this special section "*crip*[s] both dominant pandemic discourses and scholarship more broadly, embracing knowledge-making across media." The special section will be

continued with further contributions and framing material in the forthcoming issue 12.1 (Spring 2023).

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